

## HJR 40 -- CONSERVATION COMMISSION

SPONSOR: Houghton

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources by a vote of 6 to 4.

Currently, the Conservation Commission is made up of four members. Upon voter approval, this proposed Constitutional amendment increases the membership to eight and requires members to be appointed from each of the eight conservation regions as such regions have been designated as of December 1, 2011. The proposed amendment also limits the number of members that are independent of any political party to the number of independents elected as part of Missouri's congressional delegation in the most recent presidential election. A member may serve on the commission either two terms or 12 years, whichever comes first.

This bill is the same as SJR 19 (2016).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that increasing the number of commissioners on the Conservation Commission and requiring members to be from diverse geographical locations in the state would provide Missouri citizens with better representation. There has not been a commissioner from northern Missouri in over 30 years.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Houghton; Missouri Federation of Animal Owners; Ron Gaber; and Missouri Farm Bureau.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the Missouri Conservation Commission and the Department of Conservation are a model many states have tried to emulate. The commission has an 80-year track record of success and the smaller commission has led to efficient and effective leadership and decision making on conservation issues.

Testifying against the bill were Daniel Zekor; Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri Department of Conservation; Gary Van De Velde, Conservation Federation of Missouri; Bass Pro Shop; Top of the Rock; White River Marine; David Graber, Ducks Unlimited; Joseph Bachant; Nature Conservancy; and John Burk, National Wild Turkey Federation.